**Minor Forest produce plantation scheme**

3831. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that a scheme called minor forest produce plantation in tribal areas is being implemented in the country under special central assistance;

(b) if so, the States covered under that centrally sponsored scheme;

(c) whether it is being implemented in Orissa;

(d) if so, since when and the tribal areas brought under that scheme so far; and

(e) the minor forest produce plantation taken up in the tribal areas of Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) A 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Minor Forest Produce including medicinal plants is being implemented in all the States except Kerala & Delhi for the improvement of the rural poor including tribals.

(c) to (e) This scheme is being implemented by the State Government of Orissa since 1988-90. The tribal areas covered by the State Government under this scheme are in Kalahandi, Keonjhar, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur, Sunaargarh, Phulbani and Ganjam districts. Plantation on 5480 ha. has been taken up in the these tribal areas under the scheme.

**Amendment in Indian Forest Act**

3832. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to State:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the Indian Forest Act;

(b) whether Government have the objective of increasing green cover; and

(c) whether this legislation enable Government to declare deforested land as suitable for emergency afforestation programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir. Taking into account the National Forest Policy, 1988 and the emerging imperatives of conservation of Forests and Wildlife and the preservation of the nation's biodiversity, it is proposed to amend the Indian Forest Act of 1927.

(b) The National Forest Policy, 1988 stipulates that the national goal should be to have a minimum of one third land area of the country under forest or tree cover.

(c) The proposed legislation which is being finalised in consultation with State Governments and other agencies is likely to incorporate various measures including strengthening of the existing provisions to facilitate effective forest conservation and development activities.

**Development of Herbal Medical Plants**

3833. SHRI G.Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1085 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 3rd August, 1994 and state:

(a) What are the details of various central assistance for cultivation and development of herbal medical plants as apprised in part (d) of the above referred question alongwith the names, designations as addresses of the authorities empowered for grant of central assistance serialwise;

(b) whether Government or authorised agencies will allot unutilised/surplus forest land to interested entrepreneurs on long lease for cultivation of herbal plants and setting up of herbal parks under the strict guidelines of his Ministry otherwise rich and most demanded plants for chronic diseases are gradually diminishing with no requisite support from Government as its implementation means large scale employment opportunities in rural areas and friendly natural environment surrounding; and

(c) if reply to part (b) above be in the negative what alternative remedial measures and relief Government propose in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare is implementing a Central Scheme for development and cultivation of medicinal plants under which Central assistance is provided to Government/Semi Government Organiszation/ Autonomous bodies Statutory organizations etc., for establishment of herbal farms for cultivation of scarce and identified medicinal plants required by the Indian Systems of Medicines and Homeopathy drug industry in the country. The institutions eligible to seek grant under the scheme should have the basic infrastructure and adequate technical knowhow. A copy of the Scheme is enclosed as Annexure. [See Appendix 171, Annexuse No. 66]

(b) and (c) Prior approval of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, is required for diversion of forest land for any non foresty uses, including for cultivation of herbal plants or setting up of herbal parks or for assignment of forest land to any private entrepreneurs or organizations not wholly owned. controlled or managed by the Government. For this purpose, formal proposals are required to be sent by the concerned State Govts./UT Administrations in the prescribed proforma along with required details. A decision on such proposals is taken after careful consideration of all the relevant information in conformity with Forest (Conservation) Rules, 1981, and detailed guidelines issued under the Act.

**Ban on Manufacture of Benzidine Benzidine Based Dyes in Gujarat**

3834. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite ban on manufacture of benzidine, benzidine based dyes these are continued to be manufactured beyond the date of the ban i.e. 30th January, 1993 by various manufacturers particularly in Gujarat; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to strictly enforce this ban throughout the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) According to the information supplied by the Gujarat Pollution Control Board, there are 43 Units engaged in the State of Gujarat in the manufacture and use of benzidine and benzidinebased dyes. Out of these, 12 units are involved in the manufacture of benzidine while 31 units are utilising benzidine as raw material for the manufacture of dyes. All the above units have been directed by the Gujarat Pollution Control Board to stop manufacture and use of benzidine and benzidine base dyes. Similar directions have been issued by the Central Government to all the States.

**चेरापूंजी में पानी की कमी**

3835. **श्री सोमपाल:**
**श्री अनन्तराम जायसवाल:**
**श्री शारदा महन्ती:**

क्या पर्यावरण और वन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान चेरापूंजी में पानी की अत्यधिक कमी के संबंध में दिनांक 6 जुलाई, 1994 के "दि हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स" में प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है;

(ख) क्या सरकार को इस बात की जानकारी है कि विश्व में अधिकतम वर्षा के लिए पहचाने जाने वाले ऐतिहासिक और भौगोलिक महत्व के इस स्थान में पेड़ों की अंधाधुन्ध कटाई के कारण भूमि के कटाव, वर्षा की कमी और पर्यावरणीय अपक्षीणन के कारण न केवल पानी की कमी हो गई है बल्कि इस पूर्ण भूभाग का अस्तित्व ही खतरे में पड़ गया है;

(ग) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार इस संबंध में कुछ तात्कालिक और आपातकालीन उपाय करना आवश्यक नहीं समझती;

(घ) क्या सरकार ने इस संबंध में कोई लक्ष्योन्मुखी समयबद्ध योजना बनाई है; और

(ङ) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है और यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण है?

पर्यावरण और वन मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री कमल नाथ): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) से (ङ) मंत्रालय को इस तथ्य की जानकारी है